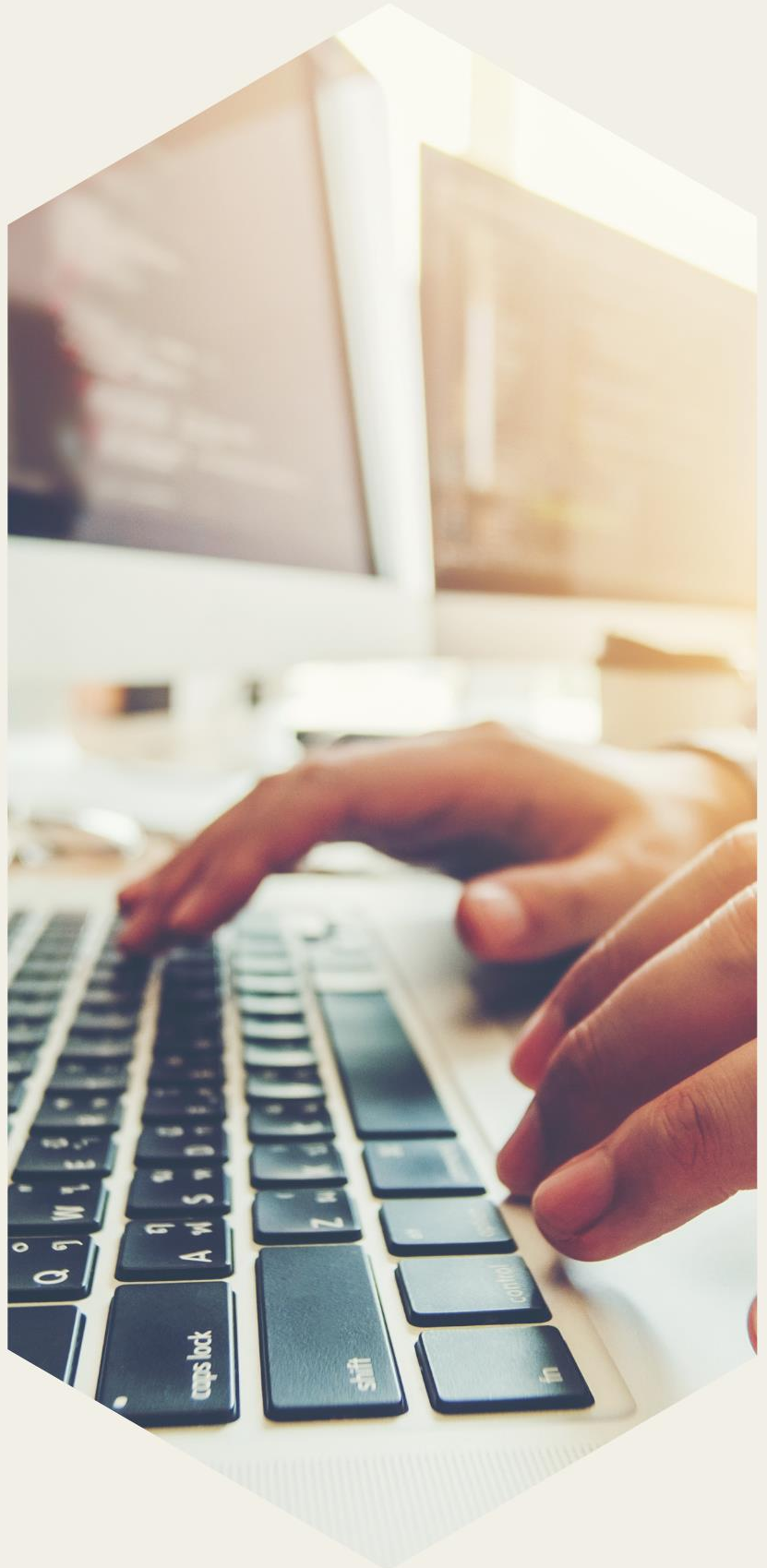code4sp
coding for social promotion

Output 5.6: Pilot Testing Activities: stage 2-upscaling

WP5:
Upscaling, Exploitation and Sustainability of Code4SP Results

Prepared by:

Center for Social
Innovation

Project Information

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Date	Version	Author	Description
14/07/2024	1.0	Popi Aresti	Compiled report of the upscaling in Portugal, Greece and Cyprus.

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Sumário Executivo

O projeto Code4SP teve como objetivo fornecer formação em programação e desenvolvimento web a grupos vulneráveis, como migrantes, refugiados e indivíduos desfavorecidos, em toda a Grécia, Chipre e Portugal. Este relatório consolida os resultados das implementações nacionais de "upscaling", destacando os principais sucessos, desafios e lições aprendidas durante a fase de ampliação do projeto.

Principais Sucessos:

- **Sessões de Formação**: Em todos os países, foram implementadas abordagens flexíveis. A Grécia e o Chipre ofereceram sessões tanto online quanto presenciais, enquanto Portugal optou pela aprendizagem autónoma com apoio individual. Esta flexibilidade foi essencial para acomodar as necessidades dos participantes.

- **Envolvimento dos Participantes**: Um grupo diversificado de participantes foi alcançado, com a Grécia a inscrever 85 estudantes, o Chipre 35 e Portugal 65. A maioria dos participantes era de grupos desfavorecidos, incluindo refugiados, migrantes e jovens de ambientes socioeconómicos baixos.

- **Estágios Profissionais**: Enquanto a Grécia e Portugal organizaram estágios para alguns estudantes, muitos participantes enfrentaram dificuldades em comprometer-se com estágios não remunerados, principalmente devido a restrições de tempo e responsabilidades pessoais.

Principais Desafios:

- **Taxas de Abandono**: Taxas elevadas de abandono foram observadas em todos os países, com alguns participantes a não conseguirem gerir a intensidade e o compromisso de tempo dos cursos, especialmente quando combinado com outras responsabilidades.

- **Aprendizagem em Contexto de Trabalho Limitada**: Embora tenham sido organizados estágios, a natureza não remunerada dos cargos e os desafios dos estágios online resultaram num envolvimento limitado dos participantes, especialmente no Chipre.

Conclusão: O projeto Code4SP introduziu com sucesso competências de programação a grupos vulneráveis, ajudando a melhorar a sua empregabilidade. No entanto, as altas taxas de abandono e as dificuldades com os estágios sublinham a necessidade de mecanismos de apoio mais robustos, cronogramas de aprendizagem mais flexíveis e maior envolvimento das empresas em futuras iterações.

Introduction

The Code4SP project aimed to provide coding and web development skills to vulnerable populations, such as migrants, refugees, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, while facilitating their integration into the labor market. The project was executed in multiple partner countries, with each region tailoring the approach to their unique context. This report consolidates the national reports from Greece, Cyprus, and Portugal, highlighting the successes, challenges, and lessons learned during the project's upscaling phase.

For a broader overview of the upscaling phase, this document can be complemented with output 7.4.2, which thoroughly analyses the feedback from mentors, trainers and participants in each phase of the upscaling.

Additionally, evidences for all parts of the piloting can be found in the respective Google Drive folder.

Part 1: Overview

Across the partner countries, the training sessions were organized differently to suit the needs of participants:

- Greece: Delivered 2-3 sessions per week from January to June 2024. Sessions were part of a combined program integrating SHA's web development courses with Code4SP training.
- Cyprus: Organized two primary training events: one online session with a 8-week duration and another one in-person session in Ayia Napa (May 25, 2024).
- Portugal: Adopted a flexible, self-paced approach. Training occurred over two main rounds:
  - Round 1: December 2023 to July 2024
  - Round 2: May 2024 to July 2024

No formal group sessions were held in Portugal; instead, participants received individualized tutoring through the Code4SP platform, with progress tracked and guidance provided on an as-needed basis.

Period of Organization:

The training periods were organized across four phases in all regions:

- Phase I (January-February 2024; April-May 2024): Introductory coding sessions.
- Phase II (March 2024; June 2024): Deepening coding knowledge through hands-on projects.
- Phase III (March-June 2024): Selecting specialized coding areas.
- Phase IV (April-July 2024): Work-based learning and internships.

Participants:

- Greece: 85 students were interested in the program, and 23 completed both Phases I and II.
- Cyprus: A total of 35 students participated (17 in online sessions, 18 in face-to-face training), and 8 enterprises were engaged for potential internships. In the end, 4 participants conducted the internship.
- Portugal: 65 participants registered, 54 completed the training, and 14 undertook internships across 5 enterprises.

Part 2: Recruitment of Students

2.1 Recruitment Methods

Recruitment efforts across the countries leveraged both digital and traditional outreach methods:

- Greece: SHA reached out through its existing student and alumni networks. The promotion also utilized social media, email campaigns, and a Discord community, generating significant interest. Action Synergy supplemented this by contacting NGOs working with vulnerable groups such as migrants and refugees, and disseminating information on social media platforms.
- Cyprus: Recruitment included distributing flyers, attending events, and directly contacting organizations that support migrants, immigrants, and asylum seekers. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram were also used to reach a wider audience.
- Portugal: The recruitment involved social media posts, dissemination through partner schools, and collaboration with training centers and policy-implementing institutions**.**

2.2 Profile of the Participants

- Greece: Students were mainly from vulnerable groups, including refugees, migrants, and local Greek students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- Cyprus: The participants were a mix of migrants, immigrants, asylum seekers, and Cypriots from disadvantaged groups (e.g., unemployed individuals). Additionally, high school students were included due to interest from a local school.

- Portugal: Participants were predominantly young adults, around 20 years old, from rural areas and with a high school background. Many students were from Brazil and São Tomé and Príncipe.

Part 3: Phase I: "Acquiring basic knowledge on coding"

Course Organization:

- Greece: The training was delivered entirely online, with 2-3 sessions per week over five months. The program covered basic coding concepts and practical exercises.
- Cyprus: The courses were also delivered primarily online, but one in-person session was held in Ayia Napa. Online sessions provided flexibility, while the in-person session aimed to increase engagement.
- Portugal: No formal sessions were held. Instead, training was self-paced, and participants received individual support through an open communication channel (WhatsApp, email).

Success Points:

- Greece and Cyprus: The flexibility of online sessions attracted a wider range of participants, including those who might not have been able to attend in-person sessions.
- Portugal: A self-paced approach led to a significant reduction in dropout rates compared to the pilot phase, allowing participants to proceed at their own speed and maintain engagement.

Challenges:

- Greece: One key challenge was the high dropout rate, likely due to the intensity of the course. However, the overall completion rate remained satisfactory.

- Cyprus: Despite efforts to engage participants, there were several dropouts due to time constraints and difficulties balancing work or school with the training.
- Portugal: Keeping students on track with the proposed timeline was challenging due to the self-paced nature of the course. Delays in progression affected the transition to later phases.

Part 4: PHASE II: "The big project-challenge"

Organization:

- Greece and Cyprus: In this phase, students worked on a "big project," applying the skills learned in Phase I. Online collaboration platforms were used for project development, presentations, and feedback.
- Portugal: The approach was more fluid, with students integrating their Code4SP training into school assignments and projects.

Success Points:

- Greece: Students successfully applied their coding knowledge to real-world projects. The online collaboration allowed them to share their work and receive feedback effectively.
- Portugal: Students were able to use their training for school projects, helping them see the practical value of their new skills.

Challenges:

- Cyprus: A high dropout rate meant that only a few participants completed Phase II, making it difficult to sustain momentum for a broader group project.
- Portugal: Students who struggled in Phase I did not progress to Phase II, resulting in some attrition.

Part 5: PHASE III: "Selecting a Code4SP specialization"

Organization:

- Greece: Students were offered individual mentorship sessions to help identify suitable specializations. Mentors guided participants based on their interests and capabilities.
- Cyprus: Mentors worked closely with the participants, the enterprises and of course the trainers to facilitate internship opportunities. However, many participants, especially migrant women, were unable to commit to internships due to personal constraints.
- Portugal: Collaboration between trainers and mentors helped identify areas where students excelled, and internships were matched accordingly.

Recruitment of Enterprises:

- Greece and Portugal: Enterprises that had been engaged in earlier phases of the project continued to support internship placements.
- Cyprus: Enterprises from the previous project phase (WP4) were approached again for potential internship placements, but securing internships was challenging due to participants' lack of availability**.**

Part 6: PHASE IV: "Work-Based Learning"

Organization:

- Greece: Internships were conducted online. Each company assigned a supervisor responsible for tracking the trainees' progress. Four trainees completed internships, working in pairs on assigned tasks.
- Cyprus: Unfortunately, no participants were able to pursue internships due to work and personal commitments.
- Portugal: Internships were arranged in groups to promote peer learning, with mentors and trainers providing regular check-ins.

Success Points:

- Greece: Participants acquired valuable skills during their internships, though their roles were largely supportive.
- Portugal: Interns successfully contributed to company projects, gaining practical experience that enhanced their professional development.

Challenges:

- Greece: The online nature of the internships limited engagement with the companies, and the level of skills acquired was insufficient for full participation in company projects.
- Portugal: The main challenge was getting participants to commit to internships due to time constraints and the fact that internships were unpaid.

Feedback from Enterprises:

- Greece and Portugal: Enterprises appreciated the initiative but noted that longer internships with more direct contact would have been beneficial.

Conclusion

The upscaling of the Code4SP methodology was more successful than the piloting phase, particularly in Phases I and II. The flexibility of the online format was key in attracting a broad range of participants. However, Phases III and IV presented challenges, particularly in maintaining long-term engagement and securing internship commitments.

Key Challenges:

- High dropout rates due to the intensity of the courses and participants' personal commitments.
- Difficulty engaging participants in the internship phase, particularly when internships were unpaid and online.

Adaptations for Future Implementations:

- Physical meetings and more direct engagement with enterprises could improve participants' commitment and integration into company environments.
- Starting recruitment earlier and allowing more time for Phases I and II would provide participants with a stronger foundation for internships.
- Offering some form of compensation could incentivize participants to engage more fully in the internship phase.